

COASTAL CONSERVANCY

Staff Recommendation
December 6, 2012

SAN ELIJO LAGOON RESTORATION PROJECT: PLANNING PHASE III

File No. 08-118-01
Project Manager: Megan Cooper

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Authorization to augment the Conservancy's December 4, 2008 authorization to disburse an additional amount of up to \$77,000 to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy for technical studies and environmental review for the San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project, San Diego County.

LOCATION: San Elijo Lagoon, Cities of Encinitas and Solana Beach, County of San Diego

PROGRAM CATEGORY: Resource Enhancement

EXHIBITS

Exhibit 1: [Project Location and Site Map](#)

Exhibit 2: [Conservancy's authorization of December 4, 2008](#)

Exhibit 3: [Project Letters](#)

RESOLUTION AND FINDINGS:

Staff recommends that the State Coastal Conservancy adopt the following resolution pursuant to Sections 31111 and 31251 - 31270 of the Public Resources Code:

"The State Coastal Conservancy hereby augments its December 4, 2008 authorization to disburse an additional amount of up to seventy-seven thousand dollars (\$77,000) to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy to fund technical studies and environmental review for the San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project, San Diego County. This authorization remains subject to the conditions of the Conservancy's December 4, 2008 authorization."

Staff further recommends that the Conservancy adopt the following finding:

"Based on the accompanying staff report and attached exhibits, the State Coastal Conservancy hereby finds that the proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy's findings under its December 4, 2008 authorization."

PROJECT SUMMARY:

Staff recommends that the Conservancy augment its December 4, 2008 authorization to disburse an additional amount of up to \$77,000 to the San Elijo Lagoon Conservancy (SELC) for additional technical studies and environmental review for the San Elijo Lagoon Restoration Project (SELRP).

The goal of the SELRP is to enhance and restore the biological functions and values of the San Elijo Lagoon Reserve with a balance of habitat types, taking into account regional historic losses (See Exhibit 2 for additional information). San Elijo Lagoon is owned by the California Department of Fish and Game, the County of San Diego and SELC. It is designated as a State Ecological Reserve and is located at the southern boundary of the City of Encinitas adjacent to Solana Beach (Exhibit 1).

There are two proposed tasks for this augmentation. The first task is a sediment reuse study. Sediment that will be excavated from San Elijo Lagoon to achieve the proposed restoration design will be placed on the beach and in the nearshore marine environment. The proposed study will include a shoreline modeling analysis for this nearshore and beach fill. The purpose of the modeling is to estimate the net shoreline and sand thickness changes resulting from placement of sediment. The information gathered from the modeling will be used to determine project-induced impacts to nearshore habitat (e.g., hard bottom reefs), which will be a critical piece of the permit applications for the SELRP.

The second task for this augmentation includes work on the CEQA/NEPA document in addition to the work as initially scoped. As initially scoped, the greenhouse gas (GHG) analysis was intended to be part of the cumulative impacts section in the EIR/EIS, and it did not include a separate quantitative analysis. At that time, there was not a widely accepted methodology to quantify climate change impacts. Since the original project approval, the Conservancy has published its “Guidance for Addressing Climate Change in California Coastal Conservancy Projects” (April 2011) and “Methodology for Calculating GHG Emissions and Reductions” (April 2011). SELC will conduct an analysis in compliance with these Conservancy guidance documents and prepare a section within the EIR/EIS to address GHG emissions associated with the proposed project and alternatives. Numerous federal, state, and local agencies, as well as air districts, have also recommended methodologies and thresholds of significance for analyzing GHG emissions, in addition to the SCC. SELC will discuss relevant approaches from federal, state, and local agencies in the GHG analysis.

Since the Conservancy’s initial approval of the project on December 4, 2008, the SELC has accomplished all tasks on schedule, as identified in the Work Program. Accomplishments have included seven technical studies (sediment characterization, sea level rise, water quality, hydrology and hydraulics, inlet stability, shoaling, and tidal muting), development of conceptual designs for three restoration alternatives, four biological surveys (protocol surveys for Pacific pocket mouse, rare plant surveys, a California Rapid Assessment Methodology (CRAM) survey, and a wetland delineation), and an ecological alternatives assessment to evaluate functional change for each draft alternative. These accomplishments have been done in partnership with the SELRP stakeholder group, which meets every other month and consists of resource and regulatory agencies, the cities of Encinitas and Solana Beach, SANDAG, Caltrans, and the North County Transit District.

Project History

On December 4, 2008 the Conservancy authorized disbursement of \$680,000 in Conservancy funds for this project. Subsequent to that approval, the Conservancy and its Executive Officer authorized the receipt and disbursement of an additional \$1,198,244 from SANDAG. The SANDAG funding is part of a program to identify potential mitigation projects for transportation corridor improvements in north San Diego County (See Exhibit 2).

This project remains consistent with the "Project History" section of the attached Conservancy's December 4, 2008 authorization (See Exhibit 2).

PROJECT FINANCING:

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|--|-----------------|
| Coastal Conservancy (SANDAG) (February 26, 2009) | \$922,854 |
| Coastal Conservancy (December 4, 2008) | \$680,000 |
| Coastal Conservancy (SANDAG) augmentation | \$275,390 |
| <u>Coastal Conservancy (current request)</u> | <u>\$77,000</u> |

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Total Project Cost | \$1,955,244 |
|---------------------------|--------------------|

Staff expects to use funds appropriated to the Conservancy in fiscal year 2010/2011 from the Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2006 (Proposition 84). Proposition 84 allows for the utilization of funds for expenditures pursuant to Division 21 of the Public Resources Code, as specified in Section 75060(b), and for projects that protect San Diego Bay and adjacent watersheds, as specified in Section 75060(f). As specified in Section 75072.6, for purposes of Section 75060(f), "San Diego Bay and adjacent watersheds" includes the coastal and bay watersheds within San Diego County. Pursuant to Section 75060(b), funds may be allocated to the improvement and protection of coastal and marine water quality and habitats, so long as the project is compliant with Division 21 of the Public Resource Code.

CONSISTENCY WITH CONSERVANCY'S ENABLING LEGISLATION, 2007 STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S) & OBJECTIVE(S), PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA & GUIDELINES, LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM POLICIES and CEQA:

The proposed project remains consistent with the Conservancy's December 4, 2008 authorization with respect to the Conservancy's enabling legislation; Conservancy's strategic plan goals and objectives; Conservancy project selection criteria and guidelines; compliance with the Local Coastal Program policies; and compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (See Exhibit 2).